

Coalition on Political Assassinations

Assassination Archives and Research Center
Citizens for Truth About the Kennedy Assassination
Committee for an Open Archives

Governing Board

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Summer, 1997

Friends and Supporters,

"In the struggle for a new trial, we would be grateful for all the assistance possible in our efforts to test the rifle in evidence in this case. I urge anyone who is interested to contact the Court of Appeals and request a prompt decision."

Dr. William F. Pepper, Esq. (Attorney for James Earl Ray)

Thanks for your interest in our work. If you are not currently a member of the Coalition on Political Assassinations, now is the time to join. Let me tell you why it is so critical at this time:

First, we need your help to build a national campaign for a retrial and release of files in the case of James Earl Ray, the alleged assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. William Pepper recently sent the urgent appeal above to Coalition members. We have already begun our efforts to demand a new trial for Ray and full disclosure of all government files in the case. Please take a moment to read our current press release on the King case as well, and to send a comment of your own to your Congressional representative.

Second, the Assassination Records Review Board was recently granted an extension of its legal life to October 1, 1998 by Congress. COPA worked with staff members of the Congressional committees over the last few months to make sure that such an extension would be proposed and granted. Our membership supported the House legislation to extend the Board's work (H.R. 1557) in the Government Reform & Oversight Committee. A Senate version was introduced by Sen. Arlen Specter (S. 844) in his Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology & Government Information. President Clinton signed the bill in early July. During the coming year we will be working to advise the Board on documents that remain to be released.

Our annual, national conference was held from June 13-15 at Georgetown University. Our theme this year was "Full Disclosure: MLK, RFK, JFK," and we focused on the unfinished business of the Review Board as well as the exciting new developments in the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our keynote speaker was Dr. William Pepper, the attorney for James Earl Ray, and a videotape of his panel and dinner speech is available now (\$25).

We now know the outcome of the first ballistics tests on the alleged murder rifle. They show a marking on the test bullet that does not appear on the slug taken from Dr. King's back. The Judge has ordered re-testing, including cleaning of the rifle barrel, and the release of earlier tests by the FBI whose results have yet to be made public. James Earl Ray, who was recently denied a medical transfer to evaluate the possibility of a liver transplant, may die before a new trial is granted. However, there are other legal options available to the King family, and history demands a resolution to this question. A full set of videotapes of this year's national conference will be available at the end of July, including the Conference Highlights tape and the book of Conference Abstracts presented. A special pre-production price is currently available until August 15 (\$200). Videotapes are still available from all earlier conferences (see enclosed flyers).

In addition, with your help we can renew publication of *Open Secrets*, which was not possible until recently. There are many exciting developments at the Review Board, new books and films, news items and organizational information that we want to get out to a much broader audience. You can help us grow by introducing new members to COPA, setting up videotape discussions at your home or community center, or sponsoring a COPA speaker in your area. Please contact us about these options.

We are planning to hold our annual regional meeting in Dallas again this year, from November 21-23 at the Paramount Hotel (214)761-9090. Discount rates and travel costs have been arranged. Next year, 1998, will be the 35th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the 30th anniversary of the murders of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. We plan to hold regional meetings in Memphis (April 4) and Los Angeles (June 5), and to hold our annual, national conference in Dallas from November 20-22, 1998. Please put our conferences into your calendar plans.

None of the critical work and public education that needs to be done concerning the unresolved major political assassinations of the last three decades can be completed without your help. The Coalition has never had sufficient funds, but we have accomplished a great deal with the support of individual people. Our press conference at this year's national gathering was covered by C-SPAN and BET. We hope that continued visibility will make it possible for COPA to accomplish our goals of full disclosure and historical resolution concerning these murders.

Please help us realize that goal before the Records Review Board ends its work or the public relegates these murders to the level of historical curiosities. If we do not succeed in combining our efforts now, the future may not hold the same promise of a potential resolution to these questions. Even now, several other national organizations are adopting the JFK Act as a model for release of records and following our lead. We need your support to continue in this effort to reclaim our national history and to secure some form of justice.

If you want to become a member, please respond today with the enclosed envelope. All members receive our newsletter *Open Secrets*, notice of COPA events, and discounts on literature and videotapes. If you can afford to become a monthly sustainer (\$10 or more), we will be glad to send you a copy of our 1997 Conference Highlights tape or Dr. Pepper's talks in August. If you are willing to become a Patron (\$250), or a Benefactor (\$500), now is the time to do so, and you can attend all local and regional meetings of COPA without charge. Founding Members (\$1,000) this year will receive a full set of the 1997 Conference Videotapes, including the Highlights tape and the Abstracts booklet, in addition to their regular benefits, including free admission to our national conference in 1998. We have survived and continued during a rough time, and we want to do more. Your contribution will be the key.

Dr. Cyril H. Wecht
Chairman, Governing Board

SPECIAL VIDEOTAPE OFFER

WHO KILLED DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.? AN UPDATE BY DR. WILLIAM PEPPER, ESQ.

(Attorney for James Earl Ray)

Dr. William Pepper, Esq., currently the attorney calling for a new trial for James Earl Ray, the accused assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a featured speaker at the fourth, annual National Conference of the Coalition on Political Assassinations, held at Georgetown University from June 13-15, 1997. His fascinating comments, updating the progress of Ray's case and the details of his investigations, as well as his insightful and compelling keynote speech given at the Awards Dinner, have been captured on a special two-hour videotape available from the Coalition. Send check or money order in advance, price includes postage, and allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. Make checks payable to Coalition on Political Assassination (or to COPA).

COPA arranged for the entire conference to be videotaped, and collected the abstracts presented in a special booklet. This year's theme was "Full Disclosure: MLK, RFK, JFK". Topics this year included forensic evidence and historical overviews of the JFK assassination, Lee Harvey Oswald (s), the Zapruder film, updates on both the Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy assassinations, Assassination Records Review Board updates, release of records, and other investigative leads. A Conference Highlights tape is being prepared which excerpts from every speaker and covers all the events of the conference. A full set of videotapes of the 1997 National Conference is in production, and a special pre-production discount (\$200) has been arranged for those who purchase the set before August 15, 1997.

A free copy of either the Dr. Pepper tape, or the 1997 Conference Highlights tape, is also available as a bonus to those who become Sustaining Members of the Coalition on Political Assassinations by sending \$10 or more each month to the Coalition.

ORDER FROM COPA:

MLK Assassination: An Update (Dr. William Pepper)	\$ 25.00
1997 National Conference (full set, including abstracts)	\$200.00 (until August 15, 1997)
1997 Conference Abstracts (booklet)	\$ 10.00
1997 Conference Highlights	\$ 25.00

1994 / 1995 / 1996 National Conference sets, Highlights tapes and Abstract Booklets are still available as well.

Send payment in advance of delivery to:
Coalition on Political Assassinations
PO Box 772
Washington, DC 20044

Phone/fax: 202-785-5299 or 202-584-1021 (fax)
Email: copa@nicom.com

COPA CONFERENCE VIDEO TAPE PROGRAMS

PRE-ORDER FORM

"Full Disclosure: MLK, RFK, JFK"

The 4th Annual Conference of: The Coalition On Political Assassinations

June 13-15, 1997

Georgetown University, Washington, DC

We are now taking orders for video tapes of the 1997 COPA Conference. The Full Set of Conference video tapes can be pre-ordered for a reduced price of \$200.00 until Aug. 15, 1997. After that time the price changes to \$225.00 for the Full Set option. The Full Set includes all videotaped Conference programs, the Conference Abstracts and the 1997 Highlight Tape.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE - Special Offer

COPA needs the support of its members to operate. Standard membership in COPA is \$35/year. Sustaining membership is \$10/month. A Patron membership is \$250/year, Benefactor is \$500/year, and Founding Member level is \$1000. In an effort to stimulate membership, COPA is offering a special membership incentive. Because of COPA's involvement in lobbying efforts, they are restricted to a form of non-profit entity that does not allow contributions to be deducted for tax purposes. To encourage funding, COPA is offering valuable free benefits to Founding Members. Founding Member status includes free pre-registration and admission to all COPA Conference events (with the possible exception of awards dinners). Also, all Founding Members will receive a free set of all 1997 COPA Conference video tapes (this includes all video tape programs and the Highlight Tape). In addition to this, all Founding Members receive all COPA publications. COPA publications include *Open Secrets* newsletter, action alerts, annual reports and conference abstracts.

COPA 1997 Conference Video Tapes

☐ **1997 Full Set video tape option - \$200**
(Includes Highlights and Abstracts)

☐ **Founding Member - \$1000**
(Includes all videos and publications)

Name

Address

Phone/fax

The Coalition On Political Assassinations

PO Box 772, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044-0772

Phone: (202) 785-5299 • Hotline: (202) 310-1858 • Fax: (202) 584-1021

E-mail: copa@nicom.com • Web page: www.nicom.com/~copa/

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Coalition on Political Assassinations

PO Box 772

Washington, DC 20044

Experts Demand Release of Surveillance Photos of M. L. King Assassination

Full Disclosure or Reconstruction of Records Sought

For Immediate Release

Friday, June 20, 1997

**Contact: John Judge
COPA
202-785-5299**

**Philip Melanson, Ph.D.
Author: Who Killed Martin Luther King?
508-748-2118**

Washington, DC - A national coalition of hundreds of forensic experts, academics and independent researchers into political assassinations is calling for full disclosure of government files relating to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4, 1968. At a recent national conference of the Coalition on Political Assassinations, Dr. William F. Pepper, Esq., revealed that government intelligence gathered on Dr. King, on the day of his assassination, included photographic surveillance. The Coalition agrees that serious questions remain surrounding the evidence in this assassination, and that it is critical that such photographic evidence be released immediately to the public. The Coalition also supports the efforts of Dr. Pepper to secure a fair trial and hearing for convicted assassin James Earl Ray, who immediately sought to reverse his guilty plea.

"The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. occurred at possibly the most surveilled crime scene in American history," notes Professor Philip Melanson, Ph.D., a political science teacher at University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth. Melanson, an expert on the King murder case, suggests that, "One or more of the surveilling agencies must have information on who killed Dr. Martin Luther King. This was a small, under-populated neighborhood which allowed full surveillance. It is quite likely that a photographic record still exists."

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The surveillance, according to Professor Melanson and William Pepper, involved local Memphis police intelligence units, the FBI, elements of Army Intelligence, and a Green Beret sniper team. It is known that the CIA also surveilled Dr. King domestically.

"The events of April 4, 1968 were recorded by elements of our government agencies. Such records should be immediately released to the public," says Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, former president of the Academy of Forensic Sciences and president of the Coalition. "These are serious charges," Wecht notes, "and the family deserves to know the truth about the murder of Dr. King. After nearly 30 years, there is no possible national security or foreign policy reason for continued secrecy. The House Select Committee on Assassinations concluded, over 20 years ago, that there was a conspiracy involved in this assassination. It remains to be fully revealed or investigated." Dr. Pepper's investigation of the case revealed that Army Intelligence and other government agencies made a photographic record of events the day King was murdered. This evidence was never seen by the House Select Committee, and has never been released.

The Coalition calls on President Clinton to invoke executive branch power to effect release of these records from all agencies and military units. Clinton has recently invoked the memory of Dr. King in his call for reconciliation between racial groups in the United States. Full release of these records, or their reconstruction, would help to accomplish the goal of "truth and reconciliation" supported by the King family. The FBI has claimed "routine destruction" of some records relating to the case. The Memphis Police intelligence files relating to Dr. King were said to have been destroyed in a fire that broke out just hours before their scheduled release to the American Civil Liberties Union. Researchers believe that duplicate copies of these files can be located and reconstructed for release as well.

The Coalition on Political Assassinations is an international network of serious researchers, academics, scientists and medical experts who believe there was a conspiracy involved in the murder of John F. Kennedy, that serious questions remain concerning the murders of Robert F. Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and others, and that all government records relating to these assassinations should be released.

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